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MinAg Reaffirms Ban on Poultry from Countries with AI

Report Categories:

Poultry and Products

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Report Highlights:

On January 30, 2011 Afghanistan issued a ban on importing of poultry products from nine countries that have been confirmed by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) to have avian influenza. This decision reconfirms similar measures adopted on July 29, 2007. Despite banning competitors from the Afghan market, U.S. exports should not be affected by this decision.

General Information:

Though the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) is mandated to enforce quarantine measures for imported plant and animal products at land and air entry points, quarantine infrastructure and plant and animal health expertise are not at a level to effectively enforce existing sanitary and phytosanitary regulations and manage the flow of products in and out of the country. MAIL does issue certificates for the export of agricultural crops but they lack international recognition and their acceptance as valid certification remains limited to countries such as Pakistan, India and the United Arab Emirates. Additionally, Afghanistan does not have specific certification requirements for imported products recognizing, in most cases, the certificate issued by the competent government authority in the country of origin. However, during certain circumstances when there is a serious threat to human, plant, and/or animal health as the consequence of imported products, the government adopts measures to help mitigate against the potential animal, plant, or human health hazard. Such measures usually remain ephemeral and enforcement by the government is limited.

Government Reaffirms AI Ban

On January 30, 2011, the Technical Committee of Avian Influenza led by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock introduced a measure banning importing frozen chicken from countries where avian influenza has been identified and reported by World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). The recent decision to ban chicken from the countries listed is a follow up to the Committee's initial decision on July 29, 2007 banning Chinese imported chicken. Translation of the decision is included below.

Begin Translation

Technical Committee of Avian Influenza convened a meeting to discuss the imported meat from China with participation of concerned Ministries. The Committee was chaired by Technical DM and the following conclusions were made:

Although the Technical Committee of Avian Influenza through its meeting dated July 29, 2007 banned importing of poultry products from countries where spread of avian influenza had been reported by World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) in which China was also listed, Veterinary staff of Herat Province has quarantined a container of frozen chicken meat that was shipped through Islam Qala port to Herat Customs House. In addition, the assigned veterinary team has also quarantined some frozen chicken meat recently in Kabul city that was imported from China.

Technical Committee and Technical Advisors of General Department of Livestock and Animal Health have recently analyzed the data on possible threat of the disease.

As per surveillance survey conducted by Ministry of Public Health and Department of Animal Health of MAIL, no avian influenza infections in animals or humans have been observed by consumption of the meat. Therefore, the Technical Committee of Avian Influenza makes the following decisions:

- General Department of Livestock and Animal Health will revise the previously signed contract with traders and make necessary amendments accordingly.
- Traders wishing to import poultry products will provide their application to General Department of Livestock and Animal Health.
- Companies that have frozen chicken meat at their cold storage are required that they put the attached awareness message on plastic bag of chicken meat.
- Importing poultry products are banned from countries where avian influenza has been reported by OIE. The following countries are included in OIE list:
 1. Bangladesh
 2. Cambodia
 3. Egypt
 4. Hong Kong
 5. Japan
 6. Korea
 7. Nepal
 8. People's Republic of China
 9. Vietnam

The Technical Committee of Avian Influenza will convene a meeting every three months to evaluate avian influenza status in the region and in the country to make appropriate decisions.

The decisions of the Technical Committee are communicated to concerned organizations for their further action within the scope of their responsibilities.

End Translation

Highly pathogenic avian influenza, H5N1, was confirmed in Afghan poultry on March 15, 2006. A recent surveillance survey conducted by Ministry of Public Health and Department of Animal Health of MAIL concluded that H5N1 was not present in Afghanistan.

Impact on U.S. Exports

It is unlikely that the January 30th ban will impact U.S. poultry exports to Afghanistan despite the ban affecting the number two exporter to the Afghan market. Poultry exports, the largest U.S. commercial export to Afghanistan at \$37 million, grew by 40 percent in 2010. Additionally, the U.S. is the number one exporter of poultry to Afghanistan, capturing 80 percent of the market in 2010. Brazil is the number two exporter with close to 10 percent of the market. The countries banned in the January 30th notice represent a very small part of market. Incidentally, despite being banned from the Afghan market since 2006, China has continued to export poultry to Afghanistan reaching a record high in 2010 at 2,433 tons. Shortly after the issuance of the notice containers with U.S. poultry were stopped in Herat temporarily and then released once their origin was determined. This highlights the weakness of the Agriculture Ministry's plant and animal protection and quarantine and food safety enforcement capacity at border crossings.

The other countries listed on the notice do not export significant quantities of poultry to Afghanistan.

Disclaimer:

Information and analysis in this report is based on a review of related subject matter decisions and should not be viewed as a definitive interpretation of the regulation in question, or of its impact on U.S. agricultural interests.